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## **Kingship and ideology under the Rum Seljuqs**

Songül Mecit\*

This paper will give a short outline of the evolution of the official ideology of kingship of the Rum Seljuqs. It will be argued that the Rum Seljuq concept of legitimate kingship was formulated for the first time under the fifth Rum Seljuq ruler 'Izz al-Dīn Kılıç Arslan II (r. 551-588/1156-1192) and re-formulated and completed under his two grandsons 'Izz al-Dīn Kay Kāwūs I (r. 608-616/1211-1220) and 'Alā' al-Dīn Kay Qubādh I (r. 616-634/1220-1237). Rum Seljuq ideology of kingship was thus formulated at a time when the new dynasty had been consolidated as an independent dynasty in Anatolia following the disintegration of the state of their Great Seljuq cousins and rivals. At the same time the ideology of kingship was formulated in order to defend their new-found status against Muslim rivals who appeared on the eastern borders of their realm, the atabegs of the Great Seljuq princes and commanders, as well as Turkish warlords not attached to the Great Seljuqs who founded principalities usurping the remains of the Great Seljuq empire in Iraq, northern Syria and upper Mesopotamia. Among these Nūr al-Dīn Maḥmūd (r. 541-569/1147-1174) the son of the Great Seljuq atabeg Zangī (r. 521-541/1127-1146) and the former's Kurdish lieutenant and successor Saladin (r. 564-589/1169-1193) were to become the main rivals of the Rum Seljuqs in the east.

The Rum Seljuq rulers did not commission treatises to elaborate their ideology and the source material for the Rum Seljuqs in general is far from rich.<sup>1</sup>

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\* I am very grateful to Professor Carole Hillenbrand for reading and commenting on the final draft of this article.

However, we can find the concept of legitimate kingship articulated in monumental inscriptions, coinage, diplomacy (letters and embassy ceremonies) and literary works (chronicles, mirrors for princes, poems). The epigraphic evidence is the most

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<sup>1</sup> There are no contemporary historical works extant from the period of the Rum Seljuqs and it will suffice here to mention briefly the four chronicles which have come down to us. These were all composed in Anatolia but after the disintegration of the Rum Seljuq state between the late 13th and late 14th century. The most important among these is Ibn Bībī's *Al-Awāmir al-'Alā'iyya fī l-umūr al-'Alā'iyya* which narrates the history of the Rum Seljuqs from the end of the reign of Kılıç Arslan II c. 581/c. 1185 to c. 679/c. early 1281; ed. M.Th. Houtsma as *Histoire des Seldjoudes d'Asie Mineure d'après Ibn Bībī*, (*Recueil de textes relatives à l'histoire des Seldjoudes*), III, ed. M.Th. Houtsma (Leiden, 1902), facsimile reproduction of the Ayasofya transcript, AS. Erzi (Ankara, 1956). The other two chronicles give very brief surveys of Seljuq history; the *Musāmarat al-akhbār wa musāyarat al-akhyār* of Karīm al-Dīn Maḥmūd Aqsarā'i; ed. O. Turan, *Müsâmeret ül-Ahbâr Moğollar zamanında Türkiye Selçukluları Tarihi* (Ankara, 1944). The *Tārīkh-i āl-i Saljūq* written by an anonymous author. ed. N. Jalali, *Tārix-e Āl-e Saljuq dar Ānāṭoli* (Tehran, 1999). The *Al-walad al-shafīq* of Qāḍī Aḥmad of Niğde remains in manuscript and has so far not received much attention. These chronicles except the work of Qāḍī Aḥmad of Niğde are discussed in: C. Cahen, 'The Historiography of the Seljuqid Period', in *Historians of the Middle East*, eds. B. Lewis and P.M. Holt (London, 1952), 59-78; C. Melville, 'The Early Persian Historiography of Anatolia', in *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East*, eds. J. Pfeiffer, S.A. Quinn and E. Tucker (Wiesbaden, 2006), 135-166. For Qāḍī Aḥmad see A.C.S. Peacock, 'Ahmad of Niğde's *al-Walad al-Shafīq* and the Seljuk past', *Anatolian Studies* 54 (2004), 95-107.

valuable for an analysis of ideology, as it is the most contemporary evidence available to us.<sup>2</sup> This evidence has however been largely ignored and we have no collection of the Rum Seljuq epigraphy.<sup>3</sup> It should be kept in mind, however, that all

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<sup>2</sup> As Carole Hillenbrand rightly points out, however, one should be aware that there is 'the danger of attributing too much historical value to inscriptions and to their highly stylised modes of expression'. C. Hillenbrand, 'Jihad Propaganda in Syria from the Time of the First Crusade Until the death of Zengi: The evidence of Monumental Inscriptions', in *The Frankish Wars and their Influence on Palestine*, eds. K. Athamina and R. Heacock (Birzeit University Press, 1994), 62.

<sup>3</sup> The compendium of Arabic inscriptions with French translations, published by a group of French scholars is outdated but remains an important work of reference. E. Combe, J. Sauvaget, and G. Wiet, eds., *Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe*, 16 vols. (Cairo, 1931-1964) (hereafter cited as *RCEA*). Volumes 8-11 published between 1936 and 1939 include the epigraphy of the Great Seljuqs and Rum Seljuqs. There are also even older works extant which contain some of the Rum Seljuq and other medieval Islamic inscriptions. Some of these works are unfortunately difficult to access and use. Cl. Huart, *Epigraphie arabe d'Asie Mineure* (Paris, 1895); İsmail Hakkı, *Kitabeler* (Istanbul, 1827); J.H. Löytved, *Konia. Inschriften der Seldschukischen Bauten* (Berlin, 1907), 21; Max van Berchem, *Inschriften aus Syrien, Mesopotamien und Kleinasien: gesammelt im Jahre 1899* (Leipzig 1909); H. Hilmi, *Sinop kitabeleri* (Sinop, 1925); İ. Hakkı Konyalı, *Abideleri ve Kitabeleri ile Konya Tarihi* (Konya, 1964). Remzi Duran's work on the Rum Seljuq inscriptions in Konya is more modern but unfortunately it is descriptive and uncritical. Remzi Duran, *Selçuklu Devri Konya Yapı Kitâbeleri İnşa ve Ta'mir* (Ankara, 2001). A useful discussion of the inscriptions on the citadel walls in Antalya that also considers the question of ideology has been

the works extant, including the texts of the inscriptions and coins, were composed by Persian and Arab officials in Persian and Arabic and thus they reflect predominantly their ideas and attitudes. These officials were all adherents of the Perso-Islamic concept of rule and were anxious to mould their alien Turkish Seljuq masters into this ideal, thereby remaining silent about their Turkish side. It is therefore not possible to prove how far the Rum Seljuq rulers themselves wanted to be autocratic kings or how far they remained attached to their Turkish traditions. We can be certain, however, that from the time of Kılıç Arslan II onwards they realised the importance of the ideology of kingship for the legitimisation of their rule. Epigraphic evidence starts to appear during his reign and he seems to be the first Rum Seljuq ruler to have minted coins. Limitation of space does not allow us to discuss here all the epigraphic as well as other sources available for all Rum Seljuq rulers. For an understanding of the Rum Seljuq ideology of kingship a case study is sufficient in which we will discuss the first formulation of that ideology under Kılıç Arslan II, when the Rum Seljuq sultanate was established, and its re-formulation during the reign of his two grandsons Kay Kāwūs I and Kay Qubādh I and the zenith of power of the sultanate.

Ideology of kingship will be understood here as the set of ideas which a ruler employs to define himself as a sovereign and to legitimize his rule. The study of ideas defining sovereign rule is important, as these were not just abstract concepts

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published more recently by S. Redford and G. Leiser, *Taşa Yazılan Zafer Antalya İçkale Surlarındaki Selçuklu Fetihnâmesi: Victory Inscribed The Seljuk Fetihnâme on the Citadel Walls of Antalya, Turkey* (Antalya, 2008).

but were decisive for the formation of a state.<sup>4</sup> Every sovereign from the most powerful king to the petty prince had to justify to different groups within his realm and outsiders his control over territories, people, armies, and resources.<sup>5</sup> Hence

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<sup>4</sup> As Claessen and Oosten aptly point out: 'There must exist an ideology, which explains and justifies a hierarchical administrative organization and socio-political inequality. If such an ideology does not exist or emerges, the formation of state becomes difficult, or even outright impossible'. H.J.M. Claessen and J.G. Oosten, eds., *Ideology and the Formation of Early States* (Leiden/New York/Köln, 1996), 5. See also H.J.M. Claessen and P.S. Skalník, eds., *The Study of the State* (The Hague, 1981), 479.

<sup>5</sup> See R.S. Humphreys, *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry* (London, 1991), 148. In Chapter six entitled 'Ideology and Propaganda Religion and State in the Early Seljukid Period', Humphreys gives a general definition of ideology and propaganda, discusses the literature which was written on other dynasties and concludes that: 'There is no general survey of ideology as such in the Seljukid period; that is, we have no broad study devoted not only to the political ideas of that age, but also to rhetoric, symbolism, and propaganda' (ibid., 159). He finishes his chapter with a brief analysis of the ideology of the early Great Seljuqs (ibid., 164-168). Humphreys' statement is still valid but in recent times the importance of research on ideology has been recognised and a very interesting work on kingship and ideology has been written by A.F. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds* (Cambridge, 2008). Fortunately, the ideology of the Great Seljuqs has also received some attention in recently published monographs. Omid Safi, *The Politics of Knowledge in Premodern Islam. Negotiating Ideology and Religious Inquiry* (Chapel Hill, 2006); Christian Lange, *Justice, Punishment and the Medieval Muslim Imagination* (Cambridge, 2008).

rulers employed ideologies of kingship to sustain their power over their lands and at the same time as an ideological weapon against internal and external rivals who contested their power. Consequently, ideologies of kingship were formulated to mark the consolidation of a sovereign's power or as was more often the case to oppose rival claims to power.

### ***The Great Seljuq model***

It is generally assumed that the Rum Seljuq sultans adopted the government system and institutions established by their Great Seljuq cousins and consequently the Perso-Islamic concept of legitimate kingship.<sup>6</sup> This concept was the result of the synthesis of the ancient Iranian concept of kingship and Islamic notions and norms

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<sup>6</sup> Nizām al-Mulk, arguably the greatest Seljuq vizier and architect behind the new state, who served under Alp Arslān and his son and successor Malikshāh, was commissioned by the latter to write a treatise on good government. The result was the 'Book of Government' (*Siyāsat-nāma*), in which Nizām al-Mulk elaborated the Perso-Islamic concept of government. This book, even though it is not a treatise specifically commissioned or designated as the formulation of the Great Seljuq ideology of kingship, can be regarded as such. Nizām al-Mulk was a member of the Persian bureaucracy of Khurasan who changed from Ghaznavid into Great Seljuq service; indeed, members of that bureaucracy developed the Perso-Islamic concept of kingship under the Ghaznavids and refined it further under the Great Seljuqs and their successor states. See A.K.S. Lambton, 'The Dilemma of Government in Islamic Persia: the Siyasat-nama of Nizam al-Mulk', in *Iran* 22 (1984), 55-66; E.I.J. Rosenthal, *Political Thought in Medieval Islam. An introductory outline* (Cambridge, 1958), esp. 82 for Nizām al-Mulk's description of the ideal king.

which resulted in the ideology usually called 'Perso-Islamic autocracy'.<sup>7</sup> While it is true that Islamic notions and norms were especially static and resistant to change, it cannot be said that they remained the same. Different ideological options, though not entirely novel, were developed as the result of historical, political, and economical changes. The Rum Seljuqs adopted the Perso-Islamic concept of the ideology of kingship as it was formulated under their Great Seljuq cousins, but they had to adapt it taking into account the political realities of their time. A compact formulation of the Perso-Islamic ideology as promoted by the Great Seljuqs is given in an inscription of the third Great Seljuq sultan Malikshāh on the Friday Mosque in Isfahan:

The mighty sultan, the greatest *shāhānshāh*, the king of the West and the East, the pillar of Islam and the Muslims, the glory of the world and religion, Abū l-Fatḥ Malikshāh b. Muḥammad, b. Dāwud, the support of the caliph of God, the commander of the faithful, may God glorify his victory!<sup>8</sup>

The honorific titles used here are stereotypical for the description of a Perso-Islamic ruler and were used by the Great Seljuqs and their successor states to express their ideology of kingship. This ideology accommodated three important elements according to which the Great Seljuq sultan was an autocratic monarch, the guardian of Islam and the Muslims, and the loyal ally and deputy of the Abbasid caliph. The resulting duties of the sultan were the support of the Sunni Abbasid caliph and the protection of Islam and Muslims against heresy and unbelievers. He

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<sup>7</sup> Humphreys, *Islamic History*, 154.

<sup>8</sup> RCEA, VII, 247 (inscription No 2775).



was obliged to uphold Islamic law, ascertain that the Muslim lands prospered and that justice prevailed in them. This concept of legitimate kingship remained the same down to the times of the Rum Seljuq successor states. Yet this concept was not static, though the Islamic notions and norms were unchangeable. Different ideological options were developed in reaction to the changes in the historical, political, and economical circumstances. Hence the options available to the Rum Seljuqs were in some aspects different from the options adopted by the Great Seljuqs. For the Great Seljuqs their ideological and political rivals were Muslim heretics, namely the Shi'i Buyids, the Shi'i Fatimid caliphs in Cairo, and the Assassins. They therefore sought to legitimize their usurpation of power in Iran and Iraq and their expansionist policy towards Syria and Egypt with the claim to protect Islam from heresy.

The Rum Seljuq sultanate was founded by the rebellious branch of the Great Seljuq family, the descendants of Kutalmış b. Arslan Isrā'īl, who revolted against the second Great Seljuq sultan Alp Arslān in 456/1064. Kutalmış based his claim to the throne on the ancient Turkish tradition of 'collective sovereignty' and the fact that his father Arslan Isrā'īl had been the eldest of the family.<sup>9</sup> Following the death of Alp Arslān in 465/1072 the son of Kutalmış, Sulaymān escaped Great Seljuq captivity,

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<sup>9</sup> The tribe or tribal confederation was ruled by a paramount noble family or house. Within the ruling house one member, in most cases the eldest of the family, was merely designated as *primus inter pares*. The Seljuq sultans could not and probably did not wish to eliminate this tradition and thus partitioned their realm to allot it as autonomous appanages to their relatives. See W. Barthold, *Turkestan down to the Mongol invasion*, 3rd ed. (London, 1968), 268; J.E. Woods, *Aqquyunlu: Clan, Confederation, Empire* (Mineapolis, 1976); Humphreys, *Islamic History*, 166.

fled westward to the border of the Great Seljuq Empire and came to Byzantine Anatolia. Here he established a principality in Nicaea/Iznik which lay opposite the Byzantine capital Constantinople. Hence, as direct neighbours of the Christian Byzantine enemy who had conquered new territory for Islam, the Rum Seljuqs could claim to be frontier warriors who safeguarded the *dār al-Islām* from the Christian enemy. However, despite the proximity to the 'Christian Enemy' Sulaymān did not aim to expand towards the west but towards the east into Syria where he came into conflict with Tutuṣ, the brother of the Great Seljuq sultan Malikshāh, and was killed in 478/1086. Sulaymān's son Kılıç Arslan in turn was taken captive by the Great Seljuq sultan Malikshāh and escaped to Nicaea after the latter's death in 588/1092. When in 490/1097 the armies of the First Crusade re-conquered Nicaea the Seljuqs were pushed into the interior of Anatolia where Kılıç Arslan I established himself in Iconium/Konya. Kılıç Arslan I did not seek revenge against the Christians. Like his predecessors he was more interested in the east. Because of the weakened position of the Great Seljuq empire he went on an expedition against it but was defeated by the armies of Muḥammad I Ṭāpar Malikshāh and died. Following the death of Muḥammad Ṭāpar in 511/1118, however, the Great Seljuq empire finally disintegrated and the Rum Seljuqs used this opportunity to consolidate their power in Anatolia. The way to the east was closed off to them by the successor states of the Great Seljuqs who became their new fellow Sunni rivals. Therefore the defence of Islam from heresy was not an integral part of Rum Seljuq policy and ideology.

*'Izz al-Dīn Kılıç Arslan II (551-588/1156-1192)*

The first extant piece of evidence for the ideology of kingship of the Rum Seljuqs is the dedication inscription<sup>10</sup> in the name of Kılıç Arslan on the *minbar* which originally had been commissioned by his father Mas'ūd for his great mosque. According to the foundation inscription the *minbar* was the work of a craftsman from Ahlat and was finished in 550/1155<sup>11</sup> but the *minbar* was placed later in the 'Alā' al-Dīn Kay Qubādh mosque<sup>12</sup> which was built on the site of an earlier building and completed in 616/1219.<sup>13</sup> It should be mentioned here that the *minbar* itself was a symbol of the sovereignty of the ruler, as every Friday in the *khuṭba* his sovereignty was acclaimed to the believers of the town.<sup>14</sup> The titles claimed by Kılıç Arslan

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<sup>10</sup> Löytved, *Konia*, 23; RCEA, IX, 11-12 (inscription no 3218).

<sup>11</sup> See Löytved, *Konia*, 23; RCEA, VIII, 289 (inscription No 3200); O. Aslanapa, *Turkish Art and Architecture* (New York/Washington, 1971), 107. This carved wooden minbar is the earliest extant Rum Seljuq work of art. The authors of the RCEA do not discuss the date of the dedication inscription but list the foundation inscription under the year 550/1155, the last year of Mas'ūd's reign and the dedication inscription of Kılıç Arslan II under the year 551/1156, the first year his reign.

<sup>12</sup> This was the main mosque in Konya and the modern Turkish spelling of its name is Alaeddin Keykubad Cami.

<sup>13</sup> See Aslanapa, *Turkish Art and Architecture*, 109.

<sup>14</sup> The symbolic function of the *minbar* has so far not received much scholarly attention, except for two works dealing with the Umayyad period Carl H. Becker, *Vom Werden und Wesen der islamischen Welt* (Leipzig, 1924), 450-471; Jean Sauvaget, *La Mosquée omeyyade de Médine* (Paris, 1947), 139-144; For a brief outline see R. Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture*, Edinburgh 1994, 46-48. See also Yasser Tabbaa, 'Monuments with a Message: Propagation of Jihād under Nūr Al-Dīn (1146-1174)', in

suggest that he commissioned his inscription to be added probably at a later date after he had firmly established his power. The inscription reads:

The mighty sultan, the greatest *shāhānshāh*, lord of the Arab and Persian kings, possessor of the neck of nations, glory of the world and religion, pillar of Islam and the Muslims, pride of the kings and sultans, experienced protector of justice, destroyer of the infidel and idol worshipers, helper of the warriors of *jihād*, guardian of the lands of God, supporter of the Caliph of God, sultan of the lands of Rum, Armenia, the Franks and Syria, Abū'l-Faṭḥ Kılıç Arslan b. Mas'ūd b. Kılıç Arslan, helper of the Commander of the Faithful, may God make his reign endure and his empire everlasting and his fortunes doubled.<sup>15</sup>

The catalogue of honorific titles used here reveals that the Rum Seljuq sultan adopted the Perso-Islamic ideology of kingship, as the inscription includes all integral elements of that concept. The Rum Seljuq sultan is presented as an autocratic monarch, as the guardian of Islam and the Muslims, and as the loyal ally and deputy of the Abbasid caliph. Added here, however are elements which reflect the political realities of Kılıç Arslan's time. Hence the *jihād* epithets claiming that

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*The Meeting of Two Worlds Cultural Exchange between East and West during the Period of the Crusades*, ed. V.P. Goss (Michigan, 1986), 230-231; S. Auld, 'The minbar of al-Aqsa. Form and function', in *Image and Meaning in Islamic Art*, ed. R. Hillenbrand (London, 2005), 42-60.

<sup>15</sup> As translated by Löytved, *Konia*, 23 and also by C. Hillenbrand, *Turkish Myth and Muslim Symbol: The Battle of Manzikert* (Edinburgh, 2007), 161.

the Rum Seljuq sultan is 'the warrior who strives to expand the realm of Islam' and the composite *jihād* epithets 'helper of the warriors of *jihād*' and 'destroyer of the infidels and idol worshippers'. The adoption of *jihād* epithets reveals that the Rum Seljuq ideology was re-formulated as a direct response to the ideological challenges posed by his Muslim rivals. Kılıç Arslan's Muslim rivals Nūr al-Dīn and Saladin were fellow Sunni rulers but they were upstarts and military warlords who had usurped power in Syria, upper Mesopotamia and Egypt. They had no real legal base for their rule. Kılıç Arslan's claim to rulership was not very different from that of a warlord but he was of noble lineage, as he was a member of the Seljuq house and thus could easily link himself to the Great Seljuq dynasty to legitimise his rule. Under the 'Counter Crusaders' Nūr al-Dīn and Saladin the ideology of *jihād* with an extensive propaganda machine was developed presenting them as warriors for the faith who waged *jihād* against the Crusaders.<sup>16</sup> The ideology of *jihād* was used most probably as an alternative concept to compensate for their lack of lineage and to legitimise their rule. Kılıç Arslan, on the other hand, did not depend as much on *jihād* propaganda as the 'Counter Crusaders' and he did not in fact care so much for *jihād*. Indeed he used the ideology of *jihād* first and foremost in order to compete with Nūr al-Dīn and Saladin.

The claim of imperial rule made in this inscription must also be seen in the context of the inter-Muslim rivalry. The Rum Seljuq sultan is styled as the 'Lord of the Arab and Persian Kings', 'Conqueror of Nations', and 'Glory of the Kings and Sultans'. He thus regarded himself as overlord of all Muslim rulers, including the

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<sup>16</sup> See E. Sivan, *L'Islam et la Croisade* (Paris, 1968); M.C. Lyons, *Saladin. The Politics of the Holy War* (Cambridge, 1982); M. Köhler, *Allianzen und Verträge zwischen fränkischen und islamischen Herrschern* (Berlin, 1991).

Christian rulers of the region, though it is noteworthy that neither the Great Seljuq Empire nor the Byzantine Empire is referred to directly. The regions claimed to be under Kılıç Arslan's rule are then specified as the towns of 'Rum, Armenia, the Franks and Syria'. Important to note here too is that the specification 'Rum' proves that from the time of Kılıç Arslan onwards the Seljuqs in Anatolia regarded themselves as a new independent dynasty, the Seljuqs of Rum. The Rum Seljuq sultan is thus presented among others as ruler over territories held by the 'Counter Crusaders' but as Nūr al-Dīn and Saladin did not regard themselves as his subordinates, he was not in a position to demand authority over these territories.

The inscriptions on Kılıç Arslan's coins propagate the same image of the great Muslim sultan. The title on the couple of dinars and several dirhams extant is *al-sultān al-mu'azzam*.<sup>17</sup> It might be an accident of survival but the earliest coins of Kılıç Arslan are a dirham minted in Konya in 571/1175 and a dinar from the year 573/1178, one year after the battle of Myriokephalon. On both of these coins Kılıç Arslan is styled as the great sultan and on the dinar the name of the caliph al-Mustaḍī (r. 566-575/1170-1180) is added.<sup>18</sup> There is no extant evidence of an investiture by the caliph which can help us to ascertain the date when exactly Kılıç Arslan was recognised officially as sultan. It seems probable that the title was first self-assumed and that he was probably invested with the title after 571/1175 but which territories were officially recognised as under his rule is not clear.

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<sup>17</sup> Halit Erkiletlioğlu/Oğuz Güler, *Selçuklu sultanları ve sikkeleri* (Kayseri, 1996), 49-52, (hereafter cited as Güler, *Selçuklu Sikkeleri*).

<sup>18</sup> See Güler, *Selçuklu Sikkeleri*, 50; Şevki N. Aykut, *Türkiye Selçuklu Sikkeleri vol.1 I. Mesud'dan I. Keykubad'a kadar (510-616/1116-1220)* (Istanbul, 2000), 190-191.

Yet the titles assumed in the inscription and his coins must be seen in the first instance as part of the ideological warfare between Kılıç Arslan and the 'Counter Crusaders'. An account given by the anonymous Rum Seljuq chronicler hints in this direction:

At the beginning of his reign Kılıç Arslan founded Aksaray, caravansarais and market places. The tyranny of Malik Dhu'l-Nūn in Kayseri had extended all boundaries, he spent his time drinking wine. The sultan marched with his army against Dhu'l-Nūn and in 560 took Kayseri from him and seized all the fortresses of that province and put them under the command of his emirs. ... The Artuqids in Diyarbakır read the *khuṭba* in the name of the sultan and the rulers of Amid from the house of the Nisanids came to kiss the sultan's hand. The rulers of Erzurum and Erzincan submitted to the sultan. In short he dominated all regions.<sup>19</sup>

This account betrays the claims made in the inscription as imperial propaganda and reveals that Kılıç Arslan's actual aim was the submission of the Turkish-held Anatolian territories. Hence his main targets were to take his immediate neighbours the Danishmendids under his direct control and to be formally recognised as overlord by the Artuqids and Nisanids. The use of *jihād* epithets in the inscription and Kılıç Arslan's claim to have submitted Christian lands

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<sup>19</sup> Anonymous, Jalali, 81-82. See also the translation by Uzluk, Anonymous, *Ta'riḫ-i āl-i Saljūq dar Anaṭulyā*, facsimile reproduction and Turkish tr., F. N. Uzluk as *Anadolu Selçukluları Devleti Tarihi. III. Histoire des Seldjoudides d'Asie Mineure par un anonyme* (Ankara, 1952), 25-26.

to his rule should therefore not be overemphasised,<sup>20</sup> especially since the same author gives a report of the battle of Myriocephalon without exploiting the ideological potential of this struggle between the Muslim sultan and the Christian Emperor.<sup>21</sup> Besides, the relations between the Rum Seljuqs and the Byzantines were for prolonged periods friendly and they regarded each other as allies. The battle of Myriocephalon was in a sense an exception.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> See Köhler, *Alianzen und Verträge*, 240. Köhler's suggestion that the *jihād* epithets used by Kılıç Arslan II and the Artuqids of Hartbirt and Mayyafariqin are more impressive than the epithets used for *jihād* propaganda by Nūr al-Dīn is only true for the Artuqids but not for Kılıç Arslan.

<sup>21</sup> See Hillenbrand, *Manzikert*, 154.

<sup>22</sup> Magdalino states that: 'Byzantine texts which celebrate the rebuilding of Dorylaion and Soublaion show that Manuel advertised this as the start of holy war of re-conquest in which he declared himself willing to lay down his life'. Paul Magdalino, *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos, 1143-1180* (Cambridge, 1993), 96; Lilie gives a similar argument and writes: 'Manuel proposed a crusade and declared publicly that he intended to come to the aid of the crusaders'. Cf. R-J. Lilie, 'Twelfth-Century Byzantine and Turkish States', in *Byzantinische Forschungen* 16 (1991), 40. However, that Manuel propagated the expedition against Kılıç Arslan as a crusade does not mean that Byzantium embraced the idea of the 'Holy War'. The warfare between emperor and sultan is hardly ever presented as a religious struggle. The histories of Choniates and Kinnamos do not reflect the idea of 'Holy War' and crusade in the connection with the fortification of Dorylaion and Soublaion or Myriocephalon. Manuel's Crusade propaganda was directed towards the west and the Latin east. Manuel did not aim to re-conquer Asia Minor or lead a 'Holy War'



Kılıç Arslan's long reign is decisive for Rum Seljuq history, as he consolidated the independent Rum Seljuq house and as under him the official ideology was formulated designating him as 'the sultan of Rum' and as a Perso-Islamic king. He was, however, not an autocratic king and we cannot be sure if he actually wanted to be one or if this was the image his Persian advisers thought appropriate. What is certain is that he realised the importance of the ideology of kingship for the legitimisation of his rule. At the same time however, it is certain that Turkish traditions from the steppe were still influential and that their Turkishness was relevant to the Rum Seljuq rulers, though the sources are silent about this. Besides, Turkish traditions were not expressed in public and remained an internal affair of the Seljuq house and their Turkmen followers.<sup>23</sup> Be that as it may, like all Seljuq rulers Kılıç Arslan could not ignore the ancient Turkish tradition of 'collective sovereignty' and divided his realm among his eleven heirs who already ruled their respective territories as semi-independent provinces. The death of Kılıç Arslan led to succession struggles among his many heirs, and only with the return of his son

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against the infidel sultan. He wanted to re-establish the land route leading through Asia Minor to the Holy Land and bring the Crusader States under his authority. It seems therefore safe to suggest that the events leading to Myriokephalon were part of the ideological warfare between the two Christian emperors and did not necessarily aim to eliminate the Rum Seljuq sultanate. Cf. the discussion in S. Mecit, *The Rum Seljuqs (473-641/1081-1243): Ideology, Mentality and Self-Image* (PhD Edinburgh, 2010), 221-237.

<sup>23</sup> Turkish cultural traditions can be found in art, the use of bow and arrow as symbols of power was later incorporated into the *tuğhrā* as one example of this. See C. Cahen, 'La tuğrā seljukide', *Journal Asiatique* 234 (1943-45), 167-172.

Kay Khusraw I from his exile in Constantinople and second accession to the throne in 601/1205 was the Rum Seljuq state re-united, reaching its apogee under his grandsons Kay Kāwūs I and Kay Qubādh I.

Drastic transformations in the political landscape contributed to the success of these two Rum Seljuq sultans. The Crusaders turned against Byzantium and the armies of the Fourth Crusade conquered Constantinople in 1204. On the other hand, the 'Counter Crusade' lost its momentum and the Ayyubid state was divided among Saladin's successors. In the power vacuum that developed Kay Kāwūs I and Kay Qubādh I transformed the Rum Seljuq state into a maritime state and the strongest power in Anatolia. The conquest of the important sea outlets of Attaleia (Antalya) in 603/1207, Sinope (Sinop) in 611/1214 and Kalon-Oros ('Alā'iyya, modern Alanya) in 620/1223 led to the economic expansion of the Rum Seljuq state and made it the wealthiest power in the region.<sup>24</sup> Hence it was during this period that the real development of the Rum Seljuq state took place, cities, especially the capital Konya, were developed and mosques, madrasas and caravansarais constructed.

This political and economic transformation was accompanied by the transformation of Rum Seljuq culture. The number of Iranian bureaucrats, scholars,

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<sup>24</sup> The wealth of the Rum Seljuq sultanate was even recognised by medieval European authors. Jean de Joinville writes: 'At the time of our arrival in Cyprus the Sultan of Iconium [Konya] was the richest ruler in all the pagan world'. Simon de St Quentin states: 'Erat quidem illud Turquie regnum nobilissimum et opulentissimum. Ibi civitates fere .C. exceptis castris et villis et casalibus.' Jean de Joinville, *Sire de Jean de Joinville*, tr. M.R.B. Shaw as *The Life of Saint Louis* (Harmondsworth, 1963), 199; Simon de St Quentin, *Historia Tartarorum*, ed. J. Richard as *Histoire des Tartares* (Paris, 1965), 66.

Sufis and craftsmen from Persian territories and especially Khurasan who fled the Mongols and sought refuge in Anatolia grew substantially during the reign of Kılıç Arslan, and under their influence the Rum Seljuq sultanate was Persianised.<sup>25</sup> The names given to Kılıç Arslan's sons and grandsons are almost all derived from the ancient epic Iranian tradition and are the most visible testament for this. As a result, the Rum Seljuq ideology of kingship was altered. Kay Kāwūs I and his brother and successor Kay Qubādh presented themselves as imperial rulers and laid special emphasis on the elements derived from the Persian model of autocratic kingship.

*'Izz al-Dīn Kay Kāwūs I (608-616/1211-1220)*

Kay Kāwūs continued the expansionist policy of his father and transformed the Rum Seljuq state into a maritime power. In 611/1214 he seized the northern port of Sinop from the Byzantine state of Trebizond and in 612/1215 re-conquered Antalya which had been recaptured by the Christians. Following this success the self-image of the sultan was altered and the new role of the Rum Seljuq sultan was symbolised and propagated to internal and external audiences through architectural constructions and inscriptions in their old strongholds, Konya and Sivas, as well as in the newly acquired towns, Sinop, Alanya and Antalya. The first expression of the re-formulated ideology of kingship can be found on an inscription on the citadel in Sinop which is dated Rabi 612/August 1215:

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<sup>25</sup> C. Hillenbrand, 'Rāvandī, the Seljuk court at Konya and the Persianisation of Anatolian cities', in *Les Seldjoukides d'Anatolie*, ed. G. Leiser (Paris, 2005), 157-169.

The king of the east and the west, the master of the kings of the world, the ruler of the Arabs and the Persians, ... the sultan of the continents and the two seas.<sup>26</sup>

Kay Kāwūs is described as 'the sultan of the continents and two seas (*al-baḥrayn*)' thus alluding to the maritime power of the Rum Seljuq state. The epithet of the sea was also used in the inscriptions on monuments built in the inner Anatolian strongholds of the Rum Seljuqs, such as Sivas ('the sultan of the land and the sea')<sup>27</sup> and Konya in the 'Alā' al-Dīn mosque ('the sultan of the land and the two seas').<sup>28</sup> This formula reappears on the city walls of Antalya where following the rebellion of the Christian people and the re-conquest by the sultan a long inscription was ordered by him to be placed on the city walls. In a self-laudatory fashion Kay Kāwūs' victory over the Christians is described and his full protocol is given to demonstrate his sovereignty to the Christians and rival Muslim rulers.<sup>29</sup> Here Kay Kāwūs is designated as:

The shadow of God on the two horizons ... the great *shāhānshāh*, the sovereign of the neck of the nations, the master of the Arab and Persian sultans, the king of the kings of the world, 'Izz al-Dunyā wa'l-Dīn, the refuge of Islam and the Muslims, the pillar of the triumphant empire (*dawla*), the

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<sup>26</sup> RCEA, X, 114 (inscription no 3761).

<sup>27</sup> RCEA, X, 146-147, (inscription no 3809).

<sup>28</sup> RCEA, X, 163 (inscription no 3835); Löytved, *Konia*, 32.

<sup>29</sup> For a translation and discussion of the long inscription which as Redford states equals a *fathnāma*, see Redford and Leiser, *Victory Inscribed*, 107-118.

glorifier of the eminent community, the rescuer of the flourishing nation,  
the sultan of the two seas, Abū'l-Faṭḥ Kay Kawūs the son of the martyr  
(*shahīd*) Sultan Kay Khusraw, the son of the most happy Sultan Kılıç Arslan,  
the proof of the Commander of the Faithful.<sup>30</sup>

As usual, the sultan is presented as the guardian of Islam and the helper of the Abbasid caliph. Special emphasis, however, is laid here on attributes of legitimacy and sovereignty derived from ancient Persian titles of sovereignty and from Muslim titles received from the caliph. The Rum Seljuq sultan is styled not only as an exemplary Muslim ruler but the epithet 'pillar of the empire' seems to suggest that he is the supreme ruler of the Muslim world.

The invocation of *jihād* on the other hand seems somewhat anachronistic and superficial, as the war between Laskaris and Kay Khusraw was the last serious military conflict between the Byzantine Empire of Nicaea and the Rum Seljuqs. As for the other Christian principalities, the state of Trebizond, Georgia, and Cilician Armenia, the main aim of the Rum Seljuq sultans was to be recognized as suzerains, to secure their grasp over Anatolia and not to wage *jihād*. In connection with the conquest of Sinop, the main motive of the Rum Seljuqs was not *jihād* or defence of the Muslims but to secure important sea outlets. It is thus surprising that, whereas in the inscriptions of Sinop the *jihād* epithet was used only once, now *jihād* epithets are adopted and Kay Khusraw is referred to as *shahīd*. Hereby it is implied that Kay Khusraw, the father of Kay Kāwūs, died waging 'holy war' against the Christians and that the latter is continuing the 'holy war'. Kay Khusraw is designated as *shahīd* in

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<sup>30</sup> RCEA, X, 109-112 (inscription no 3757); see also the translation in Redford and Leiser, *Victory Inscribed*, 112.

all subsequent inscriptions. Yet for Kay Kāwūs, as for his predecessors, the control of Anatolia and influence over his Muslim neighbours in the east played a greater role than the seizure of Christian territories. He continued the traditional Rum Seljuq policy of expansion towards the east. Like his predecessors, he sought the alliance of his immediate neighbours in Anatolia in order to receive support against the Ayyubids ruling in Mesopotamia and northern Syria. For this reason most probably he concluded a matrimonial alliance with the Mengüçük dynasty and married the daughter of Dāwūd II Bahrām Shāh, the ruler of Erzincan, before his campaign into Syria.<sup>31</sup>

*'Alā' al-Dīn Kay Qubādh I (616-634/1219-1237)*

Kay Qubādh, who followed his brother Kay Kawūs on the Rum Seljuq throne, is regarded as the greatest Rum Seljuq sultan under whom Rum Seljuq power reached its peak. Ibn Bībī who devotes the greatest part of his work to his reign presents him as the personified ideal Perso-Islamic ruler. Yet Kay Qubādh owed much of his success to the farsighted policies of his predecessor Kay Kawūs, and he did not expand the Rum Seljuq territories much further. But he secured the maritime frontiers by conquering Kalon-Oros which he rebuilt giving it his name 'Alā'iyya and by restraining the domination of the Black Sea by the Byzantine state

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<sup>31</sup> Ibn Bībī does not give the political background of this marriage alliance but it is interesting that he argues that the sultan wanted to marry the daughter of the Mengüçük ruler because of her noble lineage as she was 'of the brilliant descent of the sultan Kılıç Arslan and the root of Selçuk'. See Duda's German translation of the epitome of Ibn Bībī's work. H.W. Duda, *Die Seltschukengeschichte des Ibn Bībī* (Kopenhagen, 1959), 77.

of Trebizond, and he established himself as the overlord of Trebizond, Cilician Armenia and Georgia.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand he consolidated himself as the paramount Muslim ruler as he secured an alliance with the Ayyubid princes and defeated Jalāl al-Dīn Khwārazmshāh at Yazıçimen in 628/1230. The reason why he was remembered as the last great sultan of the Seljuq dynasty and why later rulers tried to link themselves to him is not so much a result of his success than his luck to have died before the Mongol invasion of Anatolia.<sup>33</sup> It was his successor and son Kay Khusrāw II who was defeated by the Mongols in 639/1242 at Köseadağ and made a vassal. Therefore the fact that the Mongol raids had begun under Kay Qubādh and that he was cautious with the Mongol demand for tribute and was prepared to pay it in order to keep them at bay seems not to have tarnished the picture of him as the ideal ruler.

In the inscription on the Red Tower (Kızıl Kule) of 'Alā'iyya or Alanya dated Rabī' 623/March 1226 he is portrayed as:

'Alā' al-Dunyā wa'l-Dīn, the shadow of God in the two earths, the outshining splendour of the empire, the eminent helper of the community of the

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<sup>32</sup> Andrew Peacock has written some interesting articles on the Rum Seljuqs and their Christian neighbours: A.C.S. Peacock, 'Nomadic society and the Seljuq campaigns in Caucasia, in *Iran and the Caucasus* 9,2 (2005), 205-230; idem, 'The Saljuq campaign against the Crimea and the expansionist policy of the early reign of 'Ala' al-Din Kayqubad', *JRAS* 16,2 (2006), 133-149; idem, 'Georgia and the Anatolian Turks in the 12th and 13th centuries', *Anatolian Studies* 56 (2006), 127-146.

<sup>33</sup> For a discussion of how the Ottomans sought to legitimise their rule through a link to the Rum Seljuq sultan, see Andrew Peacock's paper in this volume.

faithful, the enlivener of justice [in the two worlds], the sultan of the continent and the two seas, the holder of the two horizons, the crown of the house of Seljuq, the master of the kings and the sultans, Abū'l-Faṭḥ Kay Qubādh b. Kay Khusraw b. Kılıç Arslan, the proof of the Commander of the Faithful ...<sup>34</sup>

The protocol of Kay Qubādh is similar to that of his predecessor but one important title appears here for the first time. Kay Qubādh is designated as 'the crown of the house of Seljuq'. This affirms the noble lineage of the sultan and at the same time puts him above all members of that house. It can thus be interpreted as an allusion to the delayed Rum Seljuq victory over their Great Seljuq rivals. In contrast to their grandfather Kılıç Arslan II whose expansionist ambitions were specified in his inscription as Rum, Armenia, and Syria, the ambitions of his grandsons seem to have no limits. The portrayal of Kay Qubādh to whom Ibn Bībī dedicated his work and whose reign makes the bigger part of the chronicle is even more glorifying. It is a eulogy in which Ibn Bībī threads all characteristics expected of an exemplary ideal Perso-Islamic ruler:

From the extreme east to the extreme west the banners of Islam have not shaded a ruler like Sultan 'Alā' al-Dīn Kay Kubādh b. Kay Khusraw b. Kılıç Arslan b. Mas'ūd b. Kılıç Arslan b. Sulaymān b. Kutalmış b. Arslan Isrā'īl b. Seljuq. 'Truly, the banner of Islam shaded no other sultan, who was better suited through personal achievement, and through inheritance and who was

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<sup>34</sup> RCEA, X, 240-241 (inscription no 3957); R.M. Riefstahl, *Turkish Architecture in Southwestern Anatolia* (Cambridge, 1931), 96.



better in matters of religion and sincere in strong faith, with wider knowledge ... who was a greater protector of Islam and its followers and a greater opponent of polytheism and its professors than him'. His rank had risen to such heights that the kings of the lands of the believers and unbelievers, from the farthest Abhāz to the regions of the Hijaz, ... from the steppes of the Qipchaq to the lands of Iraq, especially the kings of Syria, regarded themselves as his chessmen and acknowledged his name in the *khutba* and on their coins.<sup>35</sup>

Firstly, our author demonstrates Kay Qubādh's noble lineage by listing his descent down to the ancestor of the Seljuq dynasty Seljuq. The noble lineage is further affirmed with the statement that Kay Qubādh was king also by right of inheritance. Secondly, Kay Qubādh I is designated as the greatest protector of Islam and the Muslims and ranked above all other Muslim rulers. This claim is strengthened through the description of the exemplary piety and religious zeal of Kay Qubādh. Thirdly, the sultan is portrayed as the best leader of *jihād* in Muslim history, but *jihād* epithets are not used. Fourthly, Kay Qubādh is described as the supreme king who has subordinated all neighbouring rulers, Muslim and Christian alike. Consequently, Ibn Bībī describes in his narrative every small-scale campaign against Muslims as world conquest. In the tradition of the Persian ideology of kingship, this was the duty and prerogative of the king. At the same time, Ibn Bībī describes every campaign against Christians, regardless of the real motives behind it, as Holy War. It could be suggested that Ibn Bībī's specification 'especially the kings of Syria regarded themselves as his chessmen' can be taken as a hint that Kay

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<sup>35</sup> Ibn Bībī, *Al Awāmīr*, tr. Duda, 99.

Qubādh had no real interest in either world conquest or *jihād*. It is more likely that Kay Qubādh wanted to be nominally recognised as suzerain in Syria, Georgia, Trebizond and Cilician Armenia and not to take them under his direct control. Therefore in contrast to the claims made in the inscriptions and by Ibn Bībī, Kay Qubādh should be understood as a ruler fully aware of *Realpolitik*.

This is not immediately evident from Ibn Bībī's chronicle because he does not aim to give an account of events but looks back especially on the period of Kay Qubādh, who for him most fully exemplified Iranian ideals of kingship as the lost Golden Age. His aim was that the sultans of his time who were powerless puppets dominated by the Mongols and their equally incompetent advisers should take it as an example from which to learn. Ibn Bībī's work and especially his account of Kay Qubādh's reign is a mirror for princes,<sup>36</sup> which the author wrote with the intention that future kings would read and learn from it.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, the ideologies of kingship formulated in the inscriptions and other sources describe an ideal and not the reality. There certainly existed a gap between the ideology which was employed to justify and legitimise the authority of

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<sup>36</sup> See E.I.J. Rosenthal, *Political Thought*, 68-81; A.K.S. Lambton, 'The Theory of Kingship in the Naṣīḥat ul-mulūk of Ghazālī', in *Theory and Practice in Medieval Persian Government*, (Collected studies series), ed. A.K.S. Lambton, (London, 1980), V, 47-55; A.K.S. Lambton, 'Islamic Mirrors for Princes', in *Theory and Practice*, VI, 419-22; C. Hillenbrand, 'A little-known Mirror for Princes of al-Ghazali', in *Words, Texts and Concepts Cruising the Mediterranean Sea*, eds. R. Arnzen and J. Thielmann (Leuven, 2004), 593-601.

the Rum Seljuq sultans and the political realities of their rule. Nevertheless, the ideological statements made in the inscriptions and by Ibn Bībī were not just mere window dressing but significant political tools. Moreover, they were decisive for the development of the Seljuq principality in Anatolia into the new dynasty of the Rum Seljuqs or 'the House' of Sulaymān b. Kutalmış b. Arslan Isrā'īl b. Seljuq. Thus this rebellious branch of the Turkish Seljuqs was transformed into a 'Perso-Islamic state' with a developed court and capital.